



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FIGURE IN NEW YORK MOB WAR INDICTED BY U.S.
FOR RACKETEERING AND TWO ATTEMPTED MURDERS**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced the arrest and indictment today of MICHAEL ZANFARDINO, a/k/a "Hippy," for racketeering crimes committed in furtherance of the Genovese Crime Family of La Cosa Nostra, including two attempted murders in the Morris Park Section of the Bronx, New York.

A seven-count Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court charges ZANFARDINO, 34, with participating in the affairs of the Genovese Family racketeering enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity, in violation of the RICO statute. The racketeering activity alleged in the Indictment includes the 1995 shooting of Darin Mazzaella and the 1990 shooting of another victim. Both shooting victims survived. The charged racketeering activity also includes the extortion and attempted extortion of two Bronx nightclubs, in 1998 and 2000, respectively. In addition, the Indictment charges ZANFARDINO

with using and carrying a firearm in connection with one of the extortions.

The Indictment and today's arrest represent the culmination of a four-year Grand Jury investigation into ZANFARDINO's racketeering activity, and in particular into the shooting of Mazzaella. In recent years, ZANFARDINO's alleged shooting of Mazzaella has been the subject matter of two jury trials in Manhattan federal court, although the crime has not been charged federally until today.

According to the evidence in those trials, ZANFARDINO shot Mazzaella nine times at point-blank range as a result of a dispute between two rival factions of organized crime - on the one side, ZANFARDINO and an associate affiliated with the Genovese Crime Family, and on the other side, Mazzaella and his associates, members of the "Tanglewood Boys," who were affiliated with the Luchese Crime Family. Hours after the shooting, one of Mazzaella's close associates, John Petrucelli, stabbed and killed a 17-year-old named Paul Cicero in revenge, the evidence at the recent trials showed.

At one of those trials, before United States District Judge THOMAS P. GRIESA last October and November, Petrucelli was convicted of murdering Cicero in furtherance of the Tanglewood Boys. Mazzaella, who in 1997 became a Government cooperating witness and testified against Petrucelli at the trial, was also a

member of the Tanglewood Boys. Petrucelli was sentenced on February 7, 2003, to life in prison for the Cicero murder.

At the other trial, before United States District Judge PETER K. LEISURE in June of 2001, a witness who testified before the Grand Jury that was investigating the Cicero murder was convicted of perjury in connection with his false testimony. The witness, Clark Schwieger, was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment.

If convicted of the RICO charges unsealed today, ZANFARDINO faces a maximum sentence of life in prison; on each of 4 extortion charges (2 conspiracy, 2 substantive), he faces a maximum sentence of 20-years' imprisonment; and on the charge of using and carrying a firearm in connection with extortion, he faces a mandatory sentence of 7 years' imprisonment, which must run consecutively -- that is, not overlap -- with any sentence that may be imposed on the other counts in the Indictment.

Prior to his arrest, ZANFARDINO resided in Queens, New York.

The defendant is scheduled to be presented before United States District Judge GEORGE B. DANIELS later today.

Mr. Comey praised the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New York City Police Department in this case.

Mr. COMEY also thanked the Westchester County District Attorney's Office and the Bronx County District Attorney's Office for their assistance during the investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney DAVID RASKIN is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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